



## MAYOR'S MESSAGE - Let YOUR voice be heard

I, along with the City Council and staff, are committed to making sure that all Burlington residents and businesses continue to benefit from the basic services provided by the City that they rely on. In the past, Burlington has been fortunate to see positive growth in our retail community. Unfortunately, the "Great Recession" changed that, and while we continue to welcome some new stores to our City, we have seen disappointing sales tax returns.

The City Council and I continue to be conservative with your tax dollars, and as such, the City Council voted unanimously not to raise the property tax levy for 2011. We have also cut roughly \$1.5M from the City budget for the years 2009 and 2010, and we must do more in 2011 to ensure that the City remains financially stable. For a small community such as Burlington, that means that we have few options but to make further reductions to our staff. And that means every resident and business will see the impact from these reductions. These reductions to the City would include less ability to respond to natural disasters such as floods, to less street maintenance, to less money for public safety and our library.

Some of the cuts we are contemplating will likely be considered to be devastating by some of our residents; while others may take the position that more cuts should be made. Recently, the City Council considered increasing the City's utility tax by 1% or 2%. These utility taxes are currently levied on telephone, electricity, and natural gas, and paid by you – the utilities' customers. The impact for a typical

family of 4 in a house of approximately 3000 square feet would only see an increase by about \$65/year. The Council deferred taking action to provide more opportunity for citizen input.

“...I urge all interested citizens to attend this important meeting to voice their opinions...”

**A work session on Burlington's 2011 budget will be held Tuesday, November 23 at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall.**

***The City Council and I strongly urge all interested citizens to attend this important meeting to voice their opinions at the Public Hearing which will directly follow the workshop @ 7 p.m. If you are unable to attend the meeting you can also call, email or send a letter with your thoughts and concerns:***

**EMAIL:** [cityhall@ci.burlington.wa.us](mailto:cityhall@ci.burlington.wa.us)

**PHONE:** (360) 755-0531

**MAIL:** 833 S. Spruce Str., Burlington WA 98233

# Citizen on Patrol Program



Earlier this year, the Burlington Police Department's Community Resource Office worked to put together the **Citizens On Patrol (COP) program**. This program was designed to be a support for the Burlington Police Department. The primary responsibilities of the

program is to provide that extra set of eyes and ears in the community, reporting what they see and find to officers that are on duty. Members of the program also provide additional support to the Police department by performing various administrative duties, performing vacation house checks, delivering CareTrak supplies to our assisted living homes (devices used to track lost Alzheimer's patients), and routinely checking for graffiti and making sure that it gets cleaned up.

The first class of 7 retired senior volunteers completed their 5 weeks of training earlier this summer and is currently on regular patrol. The Community Resource Office is currently planning a new class near the end of January and encourages anyone who would qualify under the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Skagit County to contact the Community Resource Office or stop by the Burlington Police Department and pick up an information packet or speak directly to Officer Tim Van Dyken about the program.



**The best-kept secret  
@ your library:  
Library 24/7!**

Would you like to be able to visit the library any time you want? With a library card and an Internet connection, you can.

Go to **[www.burlington.lib.wa.us](http://www.burlington.lib.wa.us)**, and click on "Reference and Homework" on the left-hand navigation bar. There you will find over 30 subscription databases, full of information you can't find for free on the Internet. Trustworthy, current information on health, job-hunting, small business, language learning, test prep, consumer reports, and homework resources for every age.

They're great fun to explore. Stop by the library and ask for a guided tour!

## CITY CONTACTS

General Information ..... 755-0531  
Mayor (*home*) ..... 755-1406

### CITY COUNCIL

Bill Aslett ..... 757-4539  
Tonya Bieche ..... 757-1020  
Edie Edmundson ..... 757-4575  
Chris Loving ..... 755-9245  
Ted Montgomery ..... 757-2786  
Steve Sexton ..... 755-9600  
Joanne Valentine ..... 755-0234

### CITY DEPARTMENTS

Building ..... 755-0077  
Buildings & Grounds ..... 757-3450  
Cemetery ..... 707-2492  
Finance ..... 755-0531  
Fire (*business*) ..... 755-0261  
Legal ..... 755-9473  
Library ..... 755-0760  
Municipal Court ..... 755-0492  
Parks & Recreation ..... 755-9649  
Planning/Permit Center ..... 755-9717  
Police (*business*) ..... 755-0921  
Public Works/Engineering ..... 755-9715  
Sewer ..... 757-4085  
Street ..... 757-4214

**EMERGENCY ..... 911**

**READ the Fall  
FLOOD  
BULLETIN  
located at the  
end of this newsletter.**



**REMEMBER:  
BE PREPARED  
& STAY PREPARED**

# GREAT Expectations!

The Citizens of Burlington are located in a challenging time and place, with the complicated issues of floodplains, endangered fish, farming, regional transportation corridors and yet, everyone sees great opportunities for this excellent community now and in the future.

One of the projects that have lots of positive comments and suggestions is moving forward with non-motorized routes around and through Burlington. With the help of many different viewpoints, there is the potential to walk and bicycle around and through Burlington and under I-5. Hopes are high for completion of the new Welcome Center in Railroad Park that will be the link through the center of town.

Burlington and Skagit County will be partners around the edges of Burlington, such as working

together to get a trail along Gages Slough from the Pulver Road Pump Station to Cascade Mall. Another key for the future is to work on designing walking/biking routes on both Pulver Road to the west and Gardner Road to the east, to include using very small gravel on any chip seal roads in the county so that bicycling will not be painful on the really rough roads. Yet another combined effort of the City, County and Dike District #12 is the levee setback along the south side of the city on the Skagit River, where new levees are going to be built and the old levees will then have public access.

With everyone working together, Burlington has the real opportunity to clean up the dirty stormwater that is now polluting the Skagit River. Gages Slough restoration projects are very successful, and the Burlington

Parks Foundation has funding for another great project in early Spring, 2011.

The biggest worry on the horizon is the changes in the Federal Flood Insurance Rate Maps and the impact on the requirement for and cost of flood insurance. The city is continuing to work to get very clear and accurate public information together and there will be additional mailings in January to try and assist people in deciding what they need to do, if anything, to prepare for map changes.

► Mark your calendars to attend a **Community Meeting** to discuss these and other major issues on **Wednesday, January 26, 2011 @ 6:30 pm** in the **City Council Chambers**.



## WINTER WARMERS @ your library

*Our programs are funded by the Friends of the Library, so you are welcome at no charge.*

**Teens:** Wii Gaming happens **every**

**Monday** at 3:00 pm! **December 21**, Drop-in Crafts makes ornaments and cookies; **December 28**, make 2011 calendars. Visual Journaling workshop for Teens on **December 28**, and holiday movies from 5-7 pm on **December 22 and 29**.

**Children's Storytimes** continue: Tuesdays at 10 am – Lapsit; Tuesdays at 10:30 am – Toddlers; and Thursdays at 10:30 am – Preschoolers.

Enjoy **Music in the Stacks** Saturday, Dec. 11.

Enjoy **Family Gaming Day** from 11-4 on Dec 18.

The **Friends of the Library** meet on January 26 at 10 am. New members are welcome!

New this year: get WARM (**Winter Adult Reading Months**). Here's a bit of encouragement to curl up with some good books this winter. It starts January 15 and features two ways to win great prizes! Look for more info at the library.

**Details at:** [www.burlington.lib.wa.us](http://www.burlington.lib.wa.us)

*The library is **closed** December 23, 24, and 25, as well as December 31 and January 1.*

## FALL & WINTER recreation PROGRAMS

### UPCOMING YOUTH & ADULT CLASSES

#### BABYSITTING BASICS

Grades 5 - 8

Learn all the basics to be a great babysitter from Camp Fire USA staff:

- age characteristics
- dealing with behavior issues, safety and risk management
- first aid and illnesses
- baby and toddler care, feeding, bottles, changing diapers, holding, burping, etc
- dealing with parents & getting info
- creating babysitting kits
- things to do with kids
- how to find babysitting jobs



Saturday, January 22

\$42

9 am – 4:30 pm

#### YOGA CLASS

Ages 13 & Up



Class is practiced in "flow" style, integrating an eclectic blend of traditional hatha yoga poses, with emphasis on breath and inner awareness. *Open to all levels.* Beginners welcome! Is this your first class? Then your

class is FREE! No pre-registration necessary.

Instructed by Sherry Thostenson.

Thursdays – 5:30 - 6:45 pm

Pay by 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday

Pay that night

\$24 per month

\$10 drop in fee

#### CARTOONING CLASSES

Ages 7 to 12

Do you like to draw? Do you want to learn how? You will learn basic drawing skills in a constructive, step by step environment. All students will leave the course with a portfolio spotlighting some of your favorite cartoon characters and the understanding of the basic creative process. Instructor: Max Elam



Tuesdays – January 4, 11, 18, 25

\$40/4 week series

4 pm – 6 pm

Min 5/Max 12

#### MS EXCEL BUSINESS ESSENTIALS

18 & Up

**Only 3.5 hours!**

If you've ever stared at your computer and thought to yourself, "It's got to be easier than this." We're here to tell you - **it is.**

Instructor and author \*Gail Sexton's books and classes teach the time-saving, practical tips you've always suspected you were missing.

\*Gail Sexton author of *I Just Want to Know How to Use It: Microsoft Project 2003* and *How to Use It: Microsoft Excel 2007 Business Essentials.*

3.5 Hour Class

\$89\*

**Offered Monthly:**

■ December 29

■ January 26

■ February 23

■ March 30

**Morning OR Afternoon Sessions:**

■ 8 am -11:30 am

■ 1 pm–4:30 pm

\* **Included in Fee:** Book & CD (\$24.95 value)



**our website for current schedule and fees :**

<http://recreation.ci.burlington.wa.us>

#### CARD MAKE & TAKES

13 & Up

Friends and family LOVE receiving handmade cards! Learn how to make your own from talented and creative Paper Crafter and Card Extraordinaire Rebecca Mallett. Bring adhesive & scissors to class.

#### KIDS COMPUTER ANIMATION SCHOOL

Animation School is located at the Burlington Parks & Recreation Center, 900 E. Fairhaven Avenue.



# WINTER BREAK BOREDOM BUSTERS

## NORTH POLE WORKSHOP

Ages 6-12



It is so fun to make your own presents and learn to make some yummy goodies too! We'll keep you super busy making homemade presents for your friends and family. Then you'll wrap them up to place under the tree. Register early—space is limited.

*Pre-register by December 15.*

**December 21 & 22 (Tues/Wed)** **\$45**  
9 am — Noon Min 6/Max 12

## CAMP HOLIDAZE

Ages 6 - 12

### ICE SKATING & HOT COCOA

Everett Community Ice Rink and Hot Cocoa. Dress warm! Register by December 20.



**Monday, December 27** **\$25**  
10 am - 3 pm Min 6/Max 10



### MOVIE, MALL, and SNACKS

Make some creative snacks, hang out at the mall, and then we're off to watch **Yogi Berra**! Register by December 21.

**Tuesday, December 28** **\$25**  
10 am - 3 pm Min 6/Max 10

### GYMNASTICS and GOOP

Spend the day making different kinds of goopy messy fun and then off to Mt. Baker Gymnastics for 2 hours! Register by December 22.



**Wednesday, December 29** **\$25**  
10 am - 3 pm Min 6/Max 10

## SIMPLY SCRAPPIN'

18+

### 14 HOUR ALL DAY CROPS

- **December 4** — 8 am to 10 pm.....\$30
- **January 8** — 8 am to 10 pm .....\$30

**14 hours** of uninterrupted cropping!

Everyone has 6 feet of table space, great lighting, and most importantly ...

**SCRAPPIN TIME!** Minimum of **12** by the Wednesday prior, so Pre-register early!

Bring your own lunch. We will provide the coffee, water, pop, and Pizza Factory pizza dinner.

*(\*Add on a Friday Night Crop for \$10 and you'll have a total of **19 hrs**)*

### \*Friday Night Crops

- **December 4** — 6 pm to 11 pm.....\$10
- **January 7** — 6 pm to 11 pm .....\$10

Minimum of **6** need to be registered by the **Wednesday** prior, so Pre-register early! Great additional time to add onto the 14 Hour crops the next day. Water, pop, and light snacks provided.

### 27 Hour Crop

**Friday, February 11 (6 pm) thru**  
**Saturday, February 12 (9 pm).....\$55**

Bring your sleeping bags and blow up mattresses or get your hubby to park your RV in the parking lot! Sleeping area provided, microwave available & coolers for personal food provided.

**Minimum of 20 Needed by February 4**

**Food provided —**

- Friday & Saturday — Casual Dinner
- Saturday Breakfast — Fruit & Muffins
- 27 Hour Coffee/Water/Pop

*Parks & Recreation — continued on page 9*

# UPDATE: FEMA Flood Mapping, Skagit River Hydrology and Levee Certification

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**B**urlington elected officials and staff continue to work in close partnership with Skagit County, the Dike Districts, Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley and La Conner to reduce the impact of the new flood maps, reduce flood risk in Burlington, and reduce flood risk in the entire region.

In December 2009, FEMA Region X released its long-awaited preliminary flood maps; however, the maps were withdrawn after just a few days when it became apparent the maps contained numerous errors. This provided an opportunity for Burlington to work with other jurisdictions, including Skagit County, to set up a technical conference in Washington D.C. in March 2010 to discuss Skagit River hydrology with FEMA experts, along with the US Geological Survey and the US Army Corps of Engineers. In May 2010, FEMA responded to the information presented in the conference, accepting none of the revisions suggested.

Subsequently, FEMA released a modified work product July 1, 2010, initially stating it expected the “official” preliminary map release to occur about the end of September. However, the official release has been delayed and the maps have not been officially released as of the date this article was written. FEMA now expects to provide the “official” release by the end of 2010. Once the release is official, the local communities have 90 days to appeal the new flood maps.

Also in July, FEMA released word of a new process local communities could access as part of an appeal. The new process, called a “Scientific Resolution Panel,” or SRP, is a panel of experts that can be formed at the request of the local community if FEMA and the local community cannot agree on the information presented in the appeal package. The panels, organized and overseen by the National Institute of Building Sciences, will consist of either three or five members, with the larger number of panelists chosen by the local community, and the smaller number by FEMA. According to FEMA, “the SRPs will provide communities with an efficient, independent way of resolving conflicting technical data while ensuring that the best science is being utilized

for their Flood Insurance Rate Maps.” A pre-qualified list of technical experts will be recruited and maintained by the National Institute of Building Sciences. We are still working to learn more details about exactly how these panels will operate.

Over the years, it is our opinion that Burlington and our partner dike districts, cities and towns have never received a truly independent review of the original research and analysis that the partnership has put forward. That’s because there was no other agency, except the agencies which generated the information at issue, to review the research and analysis put forward by the partnership. In our view, it is very difficult for these agencies (i.e., Corps of Engineers; FEMA, and the USGS) to impartially consider information submitted by the partnership which questions the validity of the prior work performed by the agencies themselves.

We expect to form a partnership to appeal the new flood maps. Partners are likely to include Burlington, Mount Vernon, Dike District 12, Sedro-Woolley, La Conner, and Skagit County. These local governments and special purpose districts, as well as other dike districts, irrigation districts, and towns in Skagit county have worked closely together for years on the flood issue. In this effort, Burlington has already directed its consultant, Pacific International Engineering, to move forward in preparing the technical basis for the flood map appeal.

It is important to remember: although our partnership will give the appeal our best effort, we judge the prognosis for success to be no better than 50/50. Therefore, all Burlington residents and businesses should make their future plans assuming that the preliminary maps will become the final maps. Meanwhile, as the theoretical analysis continues, Dike District 12 continues to work to strengthen its levee system. The pictures below shows some of the work completed this summer, which moves the upstream levee system a step closer toward eventual certification.

*Continued on page 7*

### *2010 Dike 12 levee work:*



*NW quadrant, looking south*



*NW quadrant, looking north*

Finally, in August the City partnered with the Washington State Department of Transportation to submit a grant application to the Federal Rail Administration to begin preliminary design and environmental analysis of replacing the BNSF Skagit River bridge. This bridge, constructed in 1916, is a hazard to itself and the adjacent levee system during large Skagit floods. From our study of Skagit hydrology and hydraulic characteristics, we know this bridge is too small. It blocks large wood debris generated by the Skagit river during flood events. Wood debris can accumulate on the bridge, blocking river flow, backing up water upstream, and channeling water in a way that undermines the adjacent levees.

If either the left bank or right bank levees fail, I-5 will flood as well as large parts of either Burlington or Mount Vernon, and perhaps both. Recognizing an opportunity to use High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail funding to possibly replace this bridge, WSDOT contacted Burlington and asked if the City could commit part of the funding needed. The Burlington City Council agreed to provide \$350,000 over a three-year period. The State of Washington, through WSDOT, committed \$1,918,684, and the Federal government will provide \$9,075,474 if the grant application is chosen for funding. A concept for the new bridge is shown below. As of the print deadline, no word yet on whether the grant has been awarded.



*1995 Skagit River Flood – BNSF Bridge failure*



*Concept for BNSF Skagit River Bridge replacement*

There continues to be much more going on with this issue than we have room to print here. Please feel free to contact Public Works Director Chal Martin at [cmartin@ci.burlington.wa.us](mailto:cmartin@ci.burlington.wa.us) any time you need the most recent information.



# FIRE DEPARTMENT - Frequently Asked Questions

**W**e at the Fire Department are continually grateful for the support we receive from the folks we protect. Occasionally, we receive questions from citizens and from our elected officials about the how and why of what we do. Some of the more frequently asked questions are:



***Why do I see a fire engine and crew at the grocery store?*** Because the firefighters work a 12 or 24 hour shift they must eat and sleep at the fire station. The firefighters pay for all their own food and usually bring food from home. Occasionally they need to go to the store and are allowed one such trip per shift. Even while shopping the crew is on duty and within a short sprint to the fire engine if they receive a call.

***Why does an emergency vehicle respond with lights and siren and then suddenly turn them off?*** Sometimes, when responding to an emergency, the first arriving unit will relay information that may cause us to "down grade" to a non-emergency response mode or even cancel the call and return to service.

***When you're not fighting fires or responding to medical emergencies . . . what do you do?*** The Burlington Fire Station is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We eat, sleep and work out of our fire station. All daily inspection and maintenance of department vehicles and equipment is performed at the station. We carry out fire safety inspections at businesses around town and maintain fire hydrants. Training is a big part of our day as we continuous stay sharp on all types of emergency response skills. Lastly, and the part we like least, is filling out the reports and the paperwork associated with these activities.

***Why does the Fire Department bring the fire engine and crew to a simple fire safety inspection?*** Two reasons: First, these inspections are conducted by on-duty firefighters who must be ready to respond to any emergency call while in the field. Second, an important part of the fire safety inspection is to familiarize your firefighters with the buildings and businesses in Burlington. While they check for hazards and consult with building occupants on how best to minimize the likelihood of a fire, they also are familiarizing themselves with access points and the layout of the facility . . . we call this "pre-fire planning".

***Why does the fire engine respond to a medical call with the ambulance?*** All Burlington Fire Department personnel are medically trained and the fire engine will often arrive on scene before the ambulance. The firefighters will arrive and begin treatment immediately, often resulting in a better outcome for the patient. In a more complicated medical emergency the firefighters will be needed to assist the paramedics on the ambulance. Why a fire engine? Again, we must keep that engine crew together and ready to respond at all times.

***I have been contacted by a group asking for donations to the Washington State Council of Firefighters. Does that money go directly to the Burlington Fire Department?*** No, the money does not directly benefit the Burlington Fire Department. Part of that money is used for lobbying efforts in Olympia on behalf of firefighters and their safety. Another portion of that money is paid to the company that does the soliciting on behalf of WSCFF. For more information you may contact the WSCFF at 1-800-572-5762.



**MUNICIPAL COURT** — The Municipal Court recently passed a detailed audit by a company that performs agency audits for the Department of State. The court processes 30-40 passports a month; this works out to an average of \$1,000 a month income for the City, less mailing costs. The municipal court is the only passport agency in the City.

Gross revenue for the first three quarters of 2010 is \$269,488.16 with \$165,894.74 staying local. This is approximately 21% higher than this time last year. There were 1718 tickets filed in the first half year; 11% higher than the same time last year.

The City Work Program (CWP) continues to work very successfully, and is a great resource for the City. In this time of economic hardships the program has covered the loss of part-time summer help and other cut backs the City has had to make. The workers picked up the loss of outside maintenance due to employee cut backs.

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## Daddy & Daughter Sweetheart Dance

### Friday, February 4

6:30—9:00 pm

Burlington Community Center

TICKETS - (limited to first 150 tickets)

\$15 Per Sweetheart Couple

\$ 5 Additional Daughters

- ✿ Music and Dancing
- ✿ Cake and Punch
- ✿ Girly Goodie Bags
- ✿ Raffle Prizes
- ✿ Professional 3x5 Memory Photo included



Call Burlington Parks & Rec. for tickets 755-9649

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Check back in the  
**SPRING 2011**

**SELF DEFENSE  
CLASSES  
FOR  
WOMEN AND GIRLS**



Held in the Burlington  
Parks and Recreation  
Center. Offered by:  
Joanne Factor of  
Strategic Living

[www.StrategicLiving.org](http://www.StrategicLiving.org)

Join us on **FACEBOOK!**



Visit the  
**Burlington Parks and Recreation Department page**  
on Facebook and click “like” to become one of our fans!



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[www.ci.burlington.wa.us](http://www.ci.burlington.wa.us)

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PERMIT NO. 147



## O' Christmas Tree...

Earlier this year the parks crew had to remove the diseased Christmas tree in Alpha Park, but thanks to the following people it was possible to purchase and replace it with a new 22 foot Christmas tree just in time for the Tree Lighting Ceremony.

**THANK YOU** to the following for their contributions:

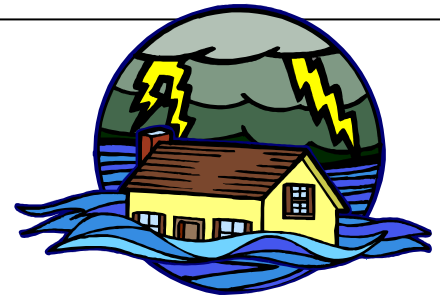
- ▶ Burlington Parks Foundation
- ▶ Burlington Soroptimist Club
- ▶ Burlington Morning Rotary
- ▶ Burlington Kiwanis Club
- ▶ Stowe's Shoes & Clothing
- ▶ Joanne Valentine
- ▶ Becky Ziel in memory of Theresa Holloman
- ▶ City of Burlington Employees
- ▶ Wiggin's Nursery Company
- ▶ Zeb, Pedro and Rafa



*new tree in Alpha Park*

Everyone is invited to the **Tree Lighting Ceremony** on **Thursday, December 2** at **6:00 p.m.** in **Alpha Park on Fairhaven Avenue**. For more details contact the Chamber of Commerce at (360) 757-0994.





## FLOOD & NATURAL HAZARD REDUCTION PUBLIC INFORMATION BULLETIN #36

**Fall 2010**

***This Bulletin is being sent to you because your property has been determined to be in the floodplain.***

La Nina is rolling in according to the climate prediction center which threatens wetter, colder northwest winter weather. This occurs when the surface of the water near the equator tends to be cooler than normal in the eastern Pacific Ocean. So NOW is the time to get that Emergency Kit updated, have your family plan organized and be prepared for winter!

Burlington is in partnership with Dike District #12 and together, great progress is being made on local flood hazard mitigation planning. Construction is in process to enlarge the levees from Lafayette to Gardner Road, completing the work that started next to Skagit River Park several years ago. Environmental review is still in process through the three-bridge corridor where the levees will be set back from the riverfront by several hundred feet. The final project design will add height to the improved levees as needed to comply with the final results of decisions made on the new Flood Insurance Rate Maps that are now out for public comment and appeals until the end of December. The process to determine the height of the levees required to protect from a 100-year flood event will not be completed for about one year.

### **Natural & Beneficial Functions of Floodplains**

Filling property to increase elevation in the floodplain is allowed today, but the long term goal is to minimize fill to protect fish and wildlife habitat. Burlington supports habitat improvements in the floodplain, and the Gages Slough restoration projects are a major effort in the city. Storm water quality monitoring in Burlington clearly shows that better water quality treatment systems are needed and this is a major focus of the surface water utility. The focus on the environment will continue to grow.

The Gages Slough habitat management plan has identified locations for restoration and water quality improvement projects, and one new mitigation project is scheduled to begin in early spring at the site of an old garbage dump, funded by the Burlington Parks Foundation. The community is working towards the goal of clean water entering the Skagit River as the top priority, along with improving public access to habitat areas.

Protecting agricultural lands is part of protecting the Natural and Beneficial Functions of Floodplains. The city has implemented the Burlington Agricultural Heritage Credit program which is a density bonus credit option that will help raise funds for farmland preservation in exchange for increased residential density in mixed use business and commercial areas of the city. Fees are very reasonable in the first year of the pilot program.

Key elements of the Skagit County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan include giving the Skagit River more room by setting the dikes back in Burlington and looking at a variety of measures through the delta area to the mouth of the Skagit River, carefully coordinating and managing the hydroelectric power dams in the river system during a flood event, permanently moving homes and development rights out of the floodway, improving the environment for wildlife, and creating new public access opportunities to improve everyone's quality of life.



## Flood Insurance

Any property owner in the City of Burlington is eligible to obtain Flood Hazard Insurance, since the city participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. Purchasing or refinancing a home will trigger a requirement for flood insurance by the lender. Coverage in the event of flooding is not included in typical homeowner's insurance policies. Flood insurance is available through your own agency or broker and includes flooding from ponding/drainage problems, snowmelt flooding, runoff on hillsides, or any flooding involving surface water. Contents of the building are a separate addition to the policy. There is limited coverage available for flood-related erosion and mudslide. Replacement cost coverage is available for principal residences. *Concerned about high Flood Insurance Rates?* You may qualify for a substantial reduction if you have an Elevation Certificate that shows your home or business is located at or above the 100 year flood elevation. You will have to retain the services of a Licensed Engineer to complete the paperwork, unless an Elevation Certificate is on file already with the Building Department, so please check here first.

**Lowering flood insurance premiums: elevate, elevate, elevate... Not only should the low floor be elevated but make sure that the floor of the crawlspace meets Technical Bulletin 11-01. Flood insurance rates are higher for buildings with crawl spaces that are two feet or more below the lowest adjacent exterior grade. Also make sure that all mechanical equipment is elevated above the BFE. This includes ductwork, heat pumps, furnaces, and propane tanks or oil tanks. Make sure any garages that have the floor below BFE are also vented along with the crawlspace.**

## Flood Warning System

Each and every citizen has a role to play in the event of a flood. **BE PREPARED!!!** The Burlington Flood Emergency Team prepares and coordinates activities needed to be ready for any flood event with the involvement of all the responsible agencies.

The procedure for warning the public is coordinated through the Skagit County Department of Emergency Management. The Emergency Alert System is activated when necessary and includes the following local radio stations:

**KBRC - 1430 AM**  
**KWLE - 1340 AM**  
**KAPS - 660 AM**

If evacuation is necessary, there will also be door-to-door notification and loudspeakers broadcasting from public safety vehicles in the neighborhood. Flaggers will be stationed at key intersections along the Evacuation Route to direct traffic.

Today, there are three neighborhoods in the Neighbor-to-Neighbor notification plan for very early warning. Contact your neighbors to ask if they want to be part of taking responsibility for each other, through a simple Telephone Tree, and call the Planning Department to get on the list. Now is the perfect time to identify your block captains and work together to **BE PREPARED.**

## Flood Safety & Disaster Preparedness

### **Every home needs to be prepared and STAY PREPARED!**

Review your Flood procedure at home with your household and take the time to put your Emergency Preparedness Kit together, or check your flashlight batteries in your existing kit. Remember, a supply of drinking water, emergency food and first aid kit are the bare minimums, along with flashlights. In addition to the basic three day supply of food and water, consider having supplies for sheltering for up to two weeks. Keep a small "grab and go" kit for your place of work with food, water, first aid supplies. For the emergency kit in the car, add flares, jumper cables and seasonal supplies.

There is an excellent FEMA publication entitled "Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness" available. This publication offers disaster information for natural hazards, technological hazards and terrorism. It will guide you for preparation in advance and recovery from a disaster. If you want to order a free copy for your home, call 1-800-480-2520. On the internet, <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/> is the website link. A copy is available in the Burlington Public Library. **THIS COVERS THE BASIC DISASTER SUPPLIES KIT IN DETAIL.**

***Earthquakes are an example of a disaster that cannot be predicted and that is not seasonal. Be prepared at all times!***

## Property Protection Measures

Let's get started on improving flood protection in your home! Staff is available to provide site specific flood and flood-related data, make site visits to review flood, drainage and sewer problems and to advise and assist on retrofitting techniques.

Stop by the Permit Center or give the Building Department a call at (360) 755-0077 and let the city provide you with technical assistance on improving flood protection in your home. A site visit will be scheduled at your convenience to put a checklist together for home flood protection improvements. Staff is also available from the Public Works Department if additional assistance is needed to assist with drainage and sewer problems.

If you want to do your own research, here are some of the recommended FEMA technical bulletins that you will find at the Burlington Public Library and the Building Department for your use:

- ▶ Homeowner's Guide to Retrofitting, FEMA-312
- ▶ Design Manual for Retrofitting Flood-prone Residential Structures, FEMA-114
- ▶ Protecting Building Utilities from Flood Damage, FEMA-348

Take a few minutes to look over the possible areas where you may need to floodproof important parts of your home. A good example is protecting utility systems. This is one of the easiest and least expensive retrofitting methods to accomplish. Whether it is elevating, relocating, or anchoring; items such as electrical panel boxes, furnaces, water heaters, washers/dryers and heating fuel tanks are typically very cost effective items to upgrade. There are also recommendations for drainage and crawl space improvements.

If you have a newer (post 1985) home, check to be sure these items have been taken care of when the home was constructed. Identify the potential for moving essential items and furniture to upper floors or the attic of your home. Materials like sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, and lumber handy for emergency waterproofing can already be on hand. This action will help minimize the amount of damage caused by floodwaters and requires minimal storage space.

**DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH  
FLOODED AREAS.**

## Drainage System Maintenance

This is the seventh year of water quality studies in Gages Slough and wetland restoration projects to improve water quality are a high priority. The commitment to long term maintenance, monitoring and habitat improvement is beginning to show, with the success of the first two wetland restoration projects that are beginning to mature. Clean water, efficient flow of water when needed, and a quality environment are the goals. Gages Slough and the Skagit River are important amenities for the community. Burlington is fortunate to have the Skagit Conservation District as a partner in Gages Slough water quality sampling.

The drainage maintenance and inspection program is part of flood hazard mitigation. Every year, all detention ponds, pipes, catch basins and other drainage control structures are inspected and corrections required as needed to ensure that the capacity of the ponds is maintained and that the ability of the system to clean the storm water is retained, in addition to inspection and maintenance of the city street system. The public drainage system, including culverts, pipes and ditches is well maintained. Gages Slough is maintained at each street intersection and culvert location. A well maintained drainage system that functions in small storms will provide the best assistance possible in large storms and floods, by quickly and efficiently carrying the excess water out of town.

Thank you for respecting the signs that state **"No Dumping – thank you"** at public access points to Gages Slough! Each property owner along the Slough is responsible for cleaning up any litter or trash that is on their property. The problem of illegal dumping of yard waste in Gages Slough and the problem of trash dumped at points of public access to the River can only be solved if everyone helps out. It is illegal to dump or to fill along Gages Slough or the Skagit River. You may report illegal dumping (this includes yard waste) in the Slough, by calling the Planning Department at 755-9717, or in writing.

## Substantial Improvement/Damage Requirements

The National Flood Insurance Program requires that if the cost of reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, or other improvements to a building equals or exceeds 50% of the building's market value, then the building must meet the construction requirements for a new building. Substantially damaged buildings must also be brought up to the same standard. The major issue is elevating the structure one foot above the 100 year flood elevation, along with all mechanical equipment, ductwork and electrical equipment, and installing properly located and sized vents. However, if you are located in the Gages Slough Special Flood Risk Zone, "breakaway walls" are required below the 100 year flood elevation, and they must be designed by a licensed structural engineer.

## Local Flood Hazard Areas

There are three flood zones in the City Limits of Burlington, the Floodway (river side of the levee), the 100 Year Flood Zone and the Special Flood Risk Zone. Most of Burlington is in the 100 Year Flood Zone.

The Special Flood Risk Zone includes all land within 300 feet of the landward toe of the levee. All structures must be designed so that floodwaters can pass underneath and there is no occupied space below one foot above the 100 year flood elevation, unless the site is within 100 feet of the levee where nothing can be built. All property in Gages Slough that is three feet or more below the 100 year flood elevation was designated as Special Flood Risk in the mid-1980's as part of a negotiating process over the uniquely complex Skagit River delta area when the Flood Insurance Rate Maps were finalized. The status of Gages Slough will be revisited when new base flood elevation maps are finalized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The goal for Burlington is to get credit for the levees when the 100-year flood elevations are established on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps. This is only possible if the levees are certified as having 100-year flood protection and the work is accredited by FEMA. The process will take quite a few more years to complete, and in the meanwhile, efforts to get FEMA to use the most accurate data in setting new base flood elevations are underway. It is a very difficult challenge because of the federal regulatory framework.

Levee enlargement work started in 1990 and earthwork is still underway. Land acquisition and environmental review are also moving ahead for setting the levees back through the three-bridge corridor (Railroad bridge, Old 99 bridge, and Interstate 5 bridge) to protect the urban areas of Burlington and Mount Vernon in a 100-year flood event.

## Map Determination & Library Information

A map determination is figuring out where the 100 year flood elevation is located relative to the first occupied floor of your home or business. This information is used to prepare an Elevation Certificate. A citywide system of elevation benchmarks is maintained in the Building Department. An average of an additional \$200 in savings is possible on your flood insurance policy if you have an elevation certificate, in addition to the 25% rate reduction available in Burlington on October 1, 2009, as a result of community participation in the federal Community Rating System program. There are issues with lenders and flood insurance providers, and if you feel that you are not getting good information, please contact the city and we will try to help.

Information on other flood improvements, such as elevating your building, filling the crawl space, or floodproofing the lower portion, is available from the City and in the Burlington Public Library. There is a flood reference area in the library and staff will assist in directing you to the information you need.

Every land use newsletter includes a flood and natural hazard mitigation topic. Call the Planning Department at 755-9717 to get on the mailing list! Take the time to participate because your ideas will be taken seriously and you will have a say in the future of your community.

## Floodplain Development Permit Requirements

Before you build, add fill, or make changes to your property and structures, be sure to contact the Planning and Building Departments to determine if any permits or approvals are necessary. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the insurance industry make frequent changes in the interpretation of floodplain standards, and you need to be sure you are using the most current information for any construction project.

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